

HCS SB 618 -- SUICIDE PREVENTION

CO-SPONSORS: Kennedy, Shields (Johnson, 61)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass by consent" by the Committee on Health Care Policy by a vote of 10 to 0.

This substitute requires the Director of the Department of Mental Health, in partnership with the Department of Health and Senior Services, to design and develop a state suicide prevention plan in collaboration with the departments of Social Services, Elementary and Secondary Education, Higher Education, and Corrections. The plan must:

- (1) Promote the use of employee assistance and workplace programs to support employees experiencing depression or other psychiatric illnesses;
- (2) Promote the use of student assistance and educational programs to support students with depression and other psychiatric illnesses and substance abuse disorders;
- (3) Provide training and technical assistance to local public health and other community-based professionals on the best practices to prevent suicides;
- (4) Coordinate federal, state, and local agencies in order to collect and analyze data on suicides and suicidal behaviors in Missouri and annually issue a public report;
- (5) Provide assistance for health care providers and family members who are caring for persons at risk for suicide or assisted suicide because of a mental health or medical condition. Assistance will include methodologies for providing pain management and emotional support;
- (6) Establish a toll-free suicide prevention hotline; and
- (7) Recommend statutory changes and implementation and funding requirements to the General Assembly by December 31, 2004.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that attempted suicides and suicides are a growing public health problem in the United States and in Missouri, resulting in increased health care costs and emotional and economic losses experienced by affected families. The bill will provide for an effective and coordinated plan to prevent suicides in Missouri.

Testifying for the bill were Senator Kennedy; Campaign Life of Missouri; and Missouri Catholic Conference.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

Joseph Deering, Legislative Analyst